

the body's immune system—a leading cause of sickness and death from irradiation. Unfortunately, no such radioprotectants are stockpiled in amounts adequate enough to be effective against large-scale nuclear or radiological attacks.

In 2004, President George W. Bush signed into law the Project Bioshield Act of 2004, authorizing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct and support research and development of effective countermeasures. The Radioprotectant Procurement Act seeks to accelerate these efforts, as every day that passes without progress in obtaining a needed countermeasure is another day that we remain vulnerable against that threat.

If we can give people a drug that will keep them alive and healthy after being exposed to high levels of radiation, then I think we should do everything we reasonably can to get that drug purchased and distributed as quickly as possible.

The bill I am introducing today calls upon the Federal Government to do just that, and to move as expeditiously as possible in this regard. I look forward to continuing to work with the administration and my colleagues in this body to make sure that these new and innovative medical countermeasures continue to be responsibly but quickly developed, tested, and stockpiled. The American people deserve nothing less.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I ask my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring and enacting this important bill.

#### INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION AGAINST THE CANADIAN SEAL HUNT

**HON. JAMES P. MORAN**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 15, 2005*

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I join many of my colleagues and 8.5 million members of the Humane Society of the United States in designating March 15 as the International Day of Action Against the Canadian Seal Hunt. Across the world in 50 cities, citizens will be coming together at Canadian Embassies and Consulates to call for an end to the horrific slaughter of harp and hooded seals.

The Canadian seal hunt season runs from November 15 to May 15 and occurs off the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador. Anyone with a commercial sealing license or provincial hunting license can take part in the seal hunt.

The Canadian Government has authorized the killing of over 300,000 seals this year alone, and 975,000 from 2003–2005. They have also helped to pay for this hunt with \$20 million in subsidies provided to the sealing industry between 1995 and 2001. While there are quotas in place, they are not enforced by the government. According to the Humane Society of the United States the number of seals killed in 2002 surpassed the quota by more than 37,000 seals, and in 2004, by nearly 16,000. These numbers do not take into account the number of seals who were wounded and perished later.

#### EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

While this season's seal hunt opened on November 15, 2004, the bulk of the killings will begin taking place in the next few weeks as new seal pups are born. These new seal pups are called "beaters" by the hunters. While hunters do kill adult seals, an estimated 95 percent of those killed are 12 days to 12 months old. These seals, who are either clubbed or shot to death, are killed primarily for their skins.

In 1991, an independent team of veterinarians found that the seal hunt did not adhere to Canada's animal welfare regulations. Most disturbing of their findings is that 42 percent of the seals they studied had likely been skinned alive while conscious. This high percentage of live skinings alone is a disturbing number, but combined with the other details of the seal hunt it is clear that it is time for an end to this practice.

The Canadian fishing industry claims that the seal hunt needs to continue because they eat too many cod and adversely impact the fish population. However, two Canadian Government marine scientists have stated clearly that the true cause of cod depletion was over fishing. They also noted that, "the consensus among the international community is that seals are not responsible for the collapse in cod stocks."

The Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans Minister hailed the seal hunt by saying it will harvest "a valuable natural resource." Harp and hooded seals are not a natural resource, but animals that should not have to endure the suffering inflicted through the government authorized seal hunt.

I join with not only the Humane Society of the United States, but also with Greenpeace, Nova Scotia Humane Society and the World Society for the Protection of Animals, among many other organizations, in calling for the Canadian Government to end this barbaric and inhumane practice.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 15, 2005*

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, March 14, 2005, I was unable to cast my floor vote on rollcall Nos. 66, 67, and 68. The votes I missed include rollcall No. 66 on motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Res. 135, providing for the establishment of a commission in the House of Representatives to assist parliaments in emerging democracies; rollcall No. 67 on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to H. Res. 101, urging the European Union to add Hezbollah to the European Union's wide-ranging list of terrorist organizations; and on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to S. 384, to extend the existence of the Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working Group for two years.

Had I been present for the votes, I would have voted "aye" on rollcall votes 66, 67, and 68.

*March 16, 2005*

#### HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE ROBERT PUENTE

**HON. HENRY CUELLAR**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 15, 2005*

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Robert Puente for his distinguished career in public service.

Robert Puente is currently serving his eighth term in the Texas Legislature. He is Chair of the House Natural Resources Committee and serves on the Local Ways and Means Committee. Mr. Puente is especially involved in ensuring that Texas always has an adequate water supply; he is cochair of the Study Commission for Water on Environmental Flows, and is a member of the Texas Water Advisory Council.

Mr. Puente is a proud product of the Texas higher educational system. He graduated from St. Mary's University in San Antonio with a bachelor's degree in political science, and he received his doctorate in jurisprudence from the University of Texas Law School in 1982.

Included among Mr. Puente's many legislative accomplishments are his work on the passage of the Edwards Aquifer Authority legislation and the establishment of the Aquifer Authority's elected board, and his support for SB1, which implemented a comprehensive water plan for the state.

Representative Puente continues to live in San Antonio with his wife, Carmen Puente, and his three children. In addition to his legislative activities, he finds the time to participate in a number of different community organizations.

Mr. Speaker, Representative Robert Puente's farsighted legislative work has helped secure the future of San Antonio and our great state of Texas, and I am proud to have the opportunity to recognize him here.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 15, 2005*

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from votes in the House on Monday, March 14, due to a previous and unavoidable commitment. Therefore, I was unable to vote on H. Res. 135 (rollcall No. 66), H. Res. 101 (rollcall No. 67), and S. 384 (rollcall No. 68). Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on all three measures considered before the House.

#### TRIBUTE TO WING KAI FAT

**HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 15, 2005*

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respects to an old friend and a wonderful man, Wing Kai Fat. He passed away on